University Council

October 2, 2020

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2020-2021
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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal for a new Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23, Measurement of Teaching Effectiveness, will be an agenda item for the October 9, 2020, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting. This agenda item was tabled at the January 24, 2020, and February 21, 2020, Full University Curriculum Committee meetings for further revisions.

Sincerely,

John Maerz, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu
    Dr. Rahul Shrivastav
Dear Members of the University Curriculum Committee:

I have attached a proposal for changes to Academic Affairs Policy No. 23. This proposal arises from a recommendation from the 2017 President’s Task Force on Student Learning and Success. Recommendation No. 7 was to strengthen systems to document and promote effective teaching. The attached proposal recommends implementation of a system to measure teaching effectiveness through the introduction of a standard end-of-course evaluation (student voice), university-wide use of peer evaluation of instructors, and a self-evaluation of instruction by the instructor. In addition, changes to the UGA Promotion and Tenure guidelines on instruction requires that evidence of teaching effectiveness may include, but is not limited to, any combination of two or more categories that include systematic observations of instruction at multiple timepoints by peers trained in the use of established measures of effective teaching (e.g., observation protocols, rubrics, review of instructional materials).

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Regards,

William Vencill

Associate Vice President of Instruction
Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23,
Measurement of Teaching Effectiveness

1. References
   a. Board of Regents Policy Manual, Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, Policy 8.3.5.1, Faculty
   b. University of Georgia Academic Affairs Policy 4.07-16, End-of-Term Course Evaluations, adopted by the University Council Curriculum Committee, February 10, 2010
   c. University of Georgia Academic Affairs Policy 1.06, Evaluation
   d. University of Georgia Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion and Tenure, Spring 2020
   f. Adopted by the University Council [date].

2. Objectives
   Evaluation of teaching in higher education emphasizes the use of three sources of evidence: students, trained peers, and self. Focusing on three sources of evidence for measuring teaching effectiveness avoids prescribing a single, perfect, or model program and provides a method by which departments will develop their own approach for evaluation following good principles and best practices.

   The UGA Promotion and Tenure guidelines on instruction require that evidence of teaching effectiveness may include, but is not limited to, any combination of two or more categories that include systematic observations of instruction at multiple timepoints by peers trained in the use of established measures of effective teaching (e.g., observation protocols, rubrics, review of instructional materials).

3. Policy
   The three sources of evidence for measuring teaching effectiveness will consist of: (a) student voice or student end-of-course evaluation, (b) trained peer voice, and (c) instructor voice or self-evaluation.

   a. **Student Voice/Student End-of-Course Evaluation**
      Students must be given the opportunity to complete a common, campus-wide, end-of-course evaluation, which is centralized, standardized, automated, and recorded, for all courses taught by a faculty member, including those taught by adjuncts and graduate assistants.

      - The end-of-course evaluation survey must include the eleven common course questions listed below in section a.i.
      - The end-of-course evaluation survey may include optional unit-specific questions.
      - The end-of-course evaluation survey may include additional questions that specifically relate to the format of the course, such as Online, Service Learning, Experiential Learning, Study Abroad, Field Study, Honors, or Research.
• The following courses are excluded from this requirement:
  • Courses involving individual instruction, such as independent study, internships, practicums, and thesis and dissertation supervision.
  • Class sections for which the number of possible respondents to the instrument is so small as to make it possible to identify individual students, thus compromising their confidentiality and possibly biasing their responses, or render results of limited statistical usefulness, such as any course where the number enrolled is less than or equal to five.
  • For multiple instructor courses, a separate survey will be provided for each instructor who is instructor of record for more than 10% of the course. The instructor(s) should not be present while the survey is being completed.
  • Faculty, including graduate teaching assistants, will have access to student comments associated with their course after grades have been submitted and may download them for personal use. Access beyond the faculty member or instructor teaching the course will be determined by the College and, where granted, will be granted only to those having a supervisory relationship to the faculty member and their designees (e.g., deans, department chairs, college and department evaluation administrators). Colleges wishing to grant access must make a request to the Office of Instruction.

i. End-of-Course Evaluations - Required Questions
The following eleven common course evaluation questions must be included on all end-of-course evaluation surveys. Units may also add additional questions.

1. The instructor clearly defined and explained the course objectives and expectations.
   Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

2. The instructor effectively engaged students in class.
   Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

3. I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.
   Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

4. The instructor was responsive to student inquiries in a timely manner.
   Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

5. I would take another course with this instructor.
   Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

6. Overall, the instructor was:
   Choose one: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor

7. Overall, the course was:
   Choose one: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor

8. What grade do you expect that you will earn in this course?
   Choose one: A, B, C, D, F
9. What were the main strengths of the course?

10. What suggestions do you have for improving the course?

11. Do you have any additional comments?

ii. Required Statement
To make students aware of implicit biases in student evaluations, the following statement will be included on all end-of-term course evaluations:

“Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors that takes place every year. The University of Georgia recognizes that student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by students' **unconscious and unintentional** biases about the personal characteristics of the instructor.

As you fill out the course evaluation, please focus on the quality of the instruction and the content of the course (e.g., assignments, textbook, in-class material) and not unrelated matters (e.g., instructor’s appearance).”

iii. Course Evaluation Guidelines
It is recommended that instructors provide time in class for students to complete the online survey, ensuring a better response rate and more consistent responses. Students should be given at least 15 minutes to complete the survey.

End-of-course survey summary scores are statistical data that are difficult to compare among different courses and instructors. Thus, guidelines for interpreting course survey data that will be used as part of the evaluation process should be developed by the departmental voting faculty a minimum of one year in advance of the faculty evaluation process for which they will be used. This will help to ensure (a) that the individual being evaluated and those conducting the evaluation have a mutual understanding regarding procedures, standards, and expectations, and (b) that the criteria for evaluation are consistently applied to all individuals being evaluated by a unit.

Several factors should be taken into account when developing guidelines for the interpretation of end-of-course surveys. Course level, requirements, content and difficulty, class size and composition, teaching style, and response rate can all influence end-of-course survey responses and thus limit the usefulness and meaning of summary statistical data. Therefore, departmental voting faculty should evaluate a given instructor/course based on scores provided for that instructor/course combination from year to year to assess consistency and improvements made to ensure quality teaching. Furthermore, end-of-course surveys provide ordinal data that should be evaluated using distributions rather than averages. Results of the entire evaluation, with a distribution of responses, number of students, course GPA (if possible), and response rate, should be reported to the dean, the department chair, and the faculty member. Units will have discretion regarding further distribution and comparison within departments.
Student Midterm Course Evaluations
Midterm course evaluations are optional. Midterm course evaluations, such as surveys or moderated discussions, can be used to support instructors in making improvement during the semester but should not be kept as a record and should not be used to evaluate the instructor during the promotion and tenure process or annual evaluations.

Questions for a midterm course evaluation may include open-ended items such as:

- What is the instructor doing well that they should keep doing?
- What elements of the course are helping you learn?
- What specific things should the instructor do differently to help you learn?
- What specific suggestions do you have for improving the course so you are better able to learn?

b. Trained Peer Voice
All units will develop a trained peer evaluation process that follows the principles of effective peer evaluation for both formative and summative purposes per University of Georgia Tenure and Promotion guidelines. Whenever possible, individuals should be selected from within the unit to serve as peer evaluators; however, they can be drawn from other units if needed.

Units will develop a plan to include systematic observations of instruction at multiple timepoints by peers trained in the use of established measures of effective teaching (e.g., observation protocols, rubrics, review of instructional materials of instructors).

c. Instructor Voice/Self-Evaluation
All faculty members are expected to reflect annually on their teaching efforts, with the goal of improving effectiveness.

Self-evaluations frequently take the form of statements included in annual progress reports or documentation of teaching accomplishments over the evaluation period. Instruments for self-evaluation may include structured forms that document the type of course taught, number of students taught, teaching objectives, activities, accomplishments, shortcomings, and plans for improvement. Checklists and writing prompts for reflection may also be used as a part of the process. Self-evaluations should be utilized with other measures of teaching effectiveness, such as peer evaluations, to illustrate how the instructor is thinking about their teaching and taking steps to improve over time based on evidence gathered from student end-of-course evaluations and peer evaluations. The Center for Teaching and Learning will support faculty in learning how to reflect on their teaching and write self-reflections by offering professional development and providing advice and exemplars on its website.